

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05
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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2973

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1138

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, BU (MAREVA, RUMYANAKA AND YORDANKA)
SUBJECT: MAREV CASE

REFS: A. STATE 123571; B. SOFIA 1096; C. STATE 123644

1. CONTINUED REFUSAL OF MRS. MAREV TO COME AND GET THE GIRLS AND RETURN WITH THEM TO US -- THE EASIEST AND QUICKEST WAY OF RESOLVING CASE -- MUST BE REGARDED AS DEPLORABLE TO SAY THE LEAST. WE HOPE IT WILL NOT BECOME A FACTOR SERIOUSLY THREATENING SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THIS CASE UPON WHICH USG HAS EXPENDED ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF CREDIT.

2. ALL CONCERNED MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT CONSULAR DIVISION, MFA, HAS FOUGHT THIS CASE TOOTH AND NAIL ALL THE WAY, WITH THE CONCESSIONS NOW BEING MADE IMPOSED ON IT BY A MUCH HIGHER POLITICAL LEVEL. WE STRONGLY SUSPECT THAT DESIRE TO HAVE THE MAREV CASE OUT OF THE WAY BEFORE ZHIVKOVA ARRIVES IN WASHINGTON PLAYED THE KEY ROLE.

3. GIVEN THE EXTREMELY FEARFUL DEMEANOR SHOWN BY MRS. MAREV'S BROTHER -

IN-LAW ZHELEZ ZHELEZOV DURING AND AFTER THE MAY 20 VARNA HEARING, WE DOUBT THAT ANY OF THE RELATIVES HERE WILL SUMMON THE COURAGE TO APPLY FOR PASSPORT FOR THEMSELVES, OR ACCOMPANY THE GIRLS TO THE
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PASSPORT OFFICE, ON THE SAY-SO OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. THUS WE PREFER NOT RPT NOT TO ATTEMPT TO TELEPHONE AT THIS TIME AND WILL NOT SEND AN EMBOFF TO SEEK THEM OUT IN VARNA; WE WILL RESERVE THESE POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION FOR FUTURE.

3. HOWEVER, BECAUSE MFA CONSULAR DIVISION HAS TOLD US IT WILL TAKE A FEW DAYS TO PASS LATEST INFORMATION TO THE GIRLS' GRANDMOTHER

AND OTHER INTERESTED RELATIVES, CHARGE WILL SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH KOVACHEV ON MAY 31 AND WILL STATE:

A. MRS. MAREV SIMPLY CANNOT BRING HERSELF TO RETURN TO BULGARIA, DESPITE GUARANTEES PROVIDED BY GOB (FOR WHICH CHARGE WILL AGAIN EXPRESS APPRECIATION).

B. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, MAREVS AND USG WILL RELY ON UNDERTAKINGS GIVEN BY KOVACHEV MAY 23 TO INFORM RELATIVES THAT ANY OF THEM MAY ACCOMPANY THE GIRLS ON A VISIT TO US AND THAT THE RELATIVE WHO IS TO ACCOMPANY SHOULD GO TO VARNA PASSPORT OFFICE TOGETHER WITH THE GIRLS TO MAKE APPLICATION.

C. MAREVS HAVE ARRANGED WITH PAA OFFICE IN WASHINGTON FOR DEPOSIT OF AIRLINE TICKETS WITH BALKAN AIR (SEE BELOW FOR DETAILS ON HOW MAREVS SHOULD ARRANGE THIS WITH PAA), AND WE REQUEST THAT EMBASSY BE INFORMED WHEN BALKAN HAS RECEIVED APPROPRIATE ADVICE FROM PAA.

D. MAREVS ON AFTERNOON OF MAY 25 CEASED "VIGIL" OUTSIDE DEPT AND WE UNDERSTAND DO NOT INTEND TO DISCUSS MATTERS WITH PRESS.

E. CHARGE WILL INQUIRE AS TO SPECIFIC DATE SCHOOL TERM ENDS AND REQUEST KOVACHEV'S ESTIMATE OF HOW SOON THEREAFTER TRAVEL WILL COMMENCE. HE WILL NOTE MAREVS HAVE AGREED NOT TO TRY TO ENTER INTO DIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN UNTIL END OF SCHOOL TERM AS REQUESTED BY MFA.

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4. WE HOPE, IN THIS WAY, TO MAKE GOB ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ARRANGEMENTS. AT SAME TIME, WE WILL LET IT BE UNDERSTOOD THAT IF ARRANGEMENTS ARE NOT MADE PROMPTLY, AND EMBASSY INFORMED OF THEM, THERE WILL BE NO WAY USG CAN RESTRAIN EITHER MAREVS, CONGRESS OR THE PRESS.

5. AS FOLLOW-UP TO KOVACHEV VISIT, CHARGE WILL ALSO ATTEMPT TO CALL MAY 31 ON ASEN YANKOV, DEPUTY CHIEF FOURTH DEPT MFA AND SENIOR US DESK OFFICER. TO YANKOV HE WILL EXPRESS DEEP APPRECIATION OF "WISE AND STATESMANLIKE" DECISION TO SETTLE MAREV CASE BEFORE MME. ZHIVKOVA ARRIVES IN WASHINGTON; HE WILL COMMUNICATE MRS. MAREV'S DECISION NOT TO TRAVEL, AND STATE THAT USG COUNTS ON MFA TO INFORM RELATIVES THAT, PER CONVERSATION WITH KOVACHEV ON MAY 23, IT IS PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT FOR THEM TO APPLY FOR PASSPORT AND ACCOMPANY GIRLS TO VARNA PASSPORT OFFICE. DEPT SHOULD NOTE THERE IS IN FOREGOING QUITE INTENTIONALLY THE UN-

STATED THREAT OF SOME POTENTIAL FOR EMBARRASSMENT IF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE GIRLS' TRAVEL HAVE NOT BEEN MADE BY JUNE 12, DATE MME. ZHIVKOVA ARRIVES IN WASHINGTON. WE CONSIDER THIS ONE OF THE BEST CARDS WE HAVE BUT DEPT MAY BE ASSURED IT WILL BE USED WITH UTMOST CIRCUMSPECTION.

6. WE LEAVE IT TO DEPT AS TO WHETHER SOMETHING SIMILAR SHOULD BE SAID TO POPOV.

7. AIRLINE TICKETS. MAREVS NEED ONLY REQUEST PAA DEPOSIT TICKETS FOR CHILDREN AND ACCOMPANYING ADULT IN ROUTINE FASHION, I.E. ALL FOREIGN AIRLINE TICKETS ARE DEPOSITED THROUGH BALKAN AIR, THEN DISTRIBUTED BY BALKAN TO FOREIGN AIRLINE REPS. BELIEVE DEPOSITING TICKETS FOR EMBASSY COULD NEEDLESSLY CONFUSE SYSTEM WHICH HAS WORKED QUITE SMOOTHLY IN OTHER CASES. REQUEST DEPT CONFIRM TO EMBASSY WHEN TICKETS HAVE BEEN PURCHASED.

8. DEPT IS CORRECT IN ITS ASSUMPTION (REF A, PARA 5C) THAT
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WE NEED NO FURTHER AFFIDAVITS FROM MAREVS. CONSUL WILL ACCEPT DEPT'S ASSURANCE OF MAREVS' INTENT (REF A) IN LIEU OF AFFIDAVIT. APPRECIATE AUTHORIZATION TO ISSUE B-2S CONTAINED REF C. WE ASSUME MFA WILL FOLLOW NORMAL PROCEDURES AND DELIVER PASSPORTS TO EMBASSY.

9. IN SUMMARY, WE BELIEVE BEST STRATEGY, IN VIEW OF MRS. MAREV'S CONTINUED REFUSAL TO PLAY OUT THE FACE-SAVING CHARADE GOB HAS SUGGESTED, AND WHICH WE BELIEVE WOULD YIELD QUICKEST RESULTS, IS TO FORCE BULGARIANS TO MAKE ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS THEMSELVES IN ORDER TO HAVE THE SLATE WIPED CLEAN BEFORE MME. ZHIVKOVA ARRIVES IN WASHINGTON, RELYING ON KOVACHEV'S STATEMENTS THAT HE WILL SEE TO IT THAT THE GIRLS' RELATIVES AND HEADMASTER ARE APPROPRIATELY INFORMED. WE WILL MONITOR AS CLOSELY AS WE CAN AND HOLD IN RESERVE POSSIBILITY OF AMBASSADOR RAISING AGAIN WITH TSVETKOV AT A LATER DATE.
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